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On the Corruption of Human Nature, and the Necessity of a Redeemer.

BELIEVE it, Christians, that what I am going to say to you upon these heads, is worthy of your most serious attention. They are truths on which our salvation depends, and therefore I would press them upon your hearts with all imaginable plainness, as well as earnestness.

Let us first consider the great corruption of our nature, the knowledge of which is the foundation of all true religion. Jesus Christ, (saith Isaiah) when he cometh, will preach glad tidings—but to whom? Why to the meek, for such only would be disposed to receive his message: He would bind up the broken hearted, for such only would be glad of help: He would proclaim liberty to the captives, for such only as are sensible of the bondage of sin, will be glad to be set at liberty. It was such as these, that our Lord invited, when he said, Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, with the burden of your sins, and I will give you rest.

Our first parents were most certainly created innocent and upright, able and disposed to obey any command, that God should think good

to give them. We are very sure it is not so with us now. Every one for himself knows, that matters are wretchedly amiss with us, until by the grace of God our nature is changed for the better. Whoever will be at the pains to look into his own heart, will find this corruption of nature discovering itself upon all occasions. We want knowledge, and grace, and help from God, yet we ask them but seldom and with indifference. We live upon his bounty and blessing, and yet we can hardly find in our hearts to be thankful. In one word, we hear what he has threatened without fear, and see his judgments upon others, without so much as thinking how soon they may visit us.

These are desperate disorders, whatever people think of them. But these are not all the proofs of a corrupt nature. We are forced to struggle hard with ourselves to do what we know to be not only our duty, but our interest. We are apt to have a much greater concern for our bodies than for our souls; for this life, than for that which is to come; for earth than for heaven. If our reason does sometimes get the better of our corrupt affections, and we resolve to do what we believe will please God, yet how soon do we forget our good resolutions! One day condemning ourselves for having done amiss; and the next day running into the same miscar-

riages, and falling into the sins of which we have so lately repented.

If we look into the world, we see nothing but sin and disorder. We see too many who live without God in the world, committing all iniquity with greediness, with whom no reason, no arguments will prevail, to hinder them from ruining themselves to all eternity. Even among those who pretend to live in the fear of God, how many do we see upon whom his laws have little or no influence. How many are there who make a *mock* of sin, though they know that it must be most displeasing to God, and make a jest of damnation, which ought to make the stoutest heart to tremble! How many who are not content to be wicked themselves, but take pains to corrupt others. All these pretend to reason, and indeed God has given them reason. But lusts and passion will corrupt and blind our reason. What then would become of the wisest of men, if God did not help us by His Spirit and by His Grace.

When we look into the world, and see the generality of people, without any concern and fear for themselves, one cannot but conclude surely they do not know the danger they are in. This is indeed the root of all our misery. We are in the way of ruin, and do not consider. We are afraid seriously to consider, lest it should make us uneasy, and we are not so uneasy as we should be. For who ought to be easy who knows the danger to which his corrupt nature exposes him? For as such, he is under the displeasure of God, and without God's help and grace he must ever continue so. For no man can mend a corrupt nature, by a reason and will that are both corrupt.

Now God can take no pleasure in

any man, until his nature be mended. Until then he is an enemy to God, and under the government of Satan. This we learn from the commission which the Apostles had from Christ himself—"To preach the gospel to the heathens in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." What the power of Satan is, we learn from many instances in scripture, and we see with our own eyes the sad effects of his power, upon those who are under his government, and who are led captive by him at his will.

These then are the evils to which, as fallen creatures, we are every soul of us subject. A corrupt heart—the malice and power of wicked spirits—a proneness to evil continually—the temptations of an evil world and a weakness of nature which cannot withstand them—a certain prospect of death—the fears of a judgment to come—the continual dread of the sentence then to be passed upon sinners, and the assurance that we cannot possibly deliver ourselves out of this sad condition.

These dangers I have set before you, not to drive you to despair, but to awaken you to a just sense of the unhappy state we are in by nature, and to bring you to a proper sense of your need of a Redeemer. Without this knowledge of our corruption by nature and consequent blindness and helplessness, we cannot feel the necessity and blessing of a Redeemer.

As fallen creatures, we must have forfeited all the favours which God designed us at the creation. We lost the Holy Spirit by which our souls were united to God, and by which we had power to know and to do whatever God should require of us. Having lost the Spirit, our reason

became insufficient to guide us, our will and our affections became ungovernable, so that of course we became subject to all manner of wickedness. We had nothing to expect but the punishment due to our offences, and are utterly unable, by any thing we can do, to help ourselves out of this sad condition.

Now does not this shew us the absolute necessity of a Redeemer—of one who could make satisfaction for our offences to the Divine justice—of one who could plead with God for his lost creatures—who could prevail with him to forgive us, and to receive us again into his favour? When we are brought to an humbling sense of our guilt, and wretchedness, and helplessness, and ignorance, shall we not perceive the necessity of some one who can inform us *upon what terms God will forgive us?* Who can shew us the way and means of salvation, who can give us that Holy Spirit which we had lost to help us to regain our former happy state? Shall we not then perceive our need of one, who can help us to subdue all our enemies, spiritual and temporal, who can teach us how we ought to live so as to please God, and who shall be able to deliver us from the wrath to come?

Now all this our ever blessed Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ, has done for us. He has given us the greatest assurance that for his sake, God will be reconciled to us; that he will accept of our repentance when we have done amiss; that he will treat us as he would have treated our first parents, had they not grievously offended, if we will be governed by him; that he will give us his Holy Spirit to sanctify and mend our corrupt nature, and that he hath prevailed with God to make us everlastingly happy, if during

this short life of trial we will do our best to fit ourselves for that happy state—and moreover he has assured us, that every one, who shall be born may have an interest in this blessing, may obtain this salvation, and none will lose it, except those who lose it by their own fault.

God knew that our reason, corrupted by our passions, was not able to lead us in the way we should go; for as the Spirit of God assures us, and we find it by sad experience, *there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.* God has given us safe and infallible rules to walk by to lead us to heaven and happiness. He knew how apt we are to go astray: He has therefore promised, for our Redeemer's sake, to accept of our repentance. He knew the weakness of our nature, and the difficulties and enemies we had to struggle with; he therefore offers us the assistance of his Almighty Spirit.

The greatest sinner may be sure of pardon, if it be not purely his own fault: the weakest christian may depend upon all the assistance that he can possibly want; the meanest servant of Christ may be assured, that he will not be overlooked; and every christian has a sure promise that his labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

But O, do not imagine, that in return for all God's love, and for all that he hath done for us, he expects no other fruits of his Son's labours and sufferings, besides our bare professions of gratitude. *Woe be to that man who acts as if he thinks so!*

We do indeed, in our daily devotions, give God thanks for his inestimable love in the redemption of the world, by our Lord Jesus Christ. But what will this signify, if in our works we deny him; if in our lives

we are no better than heathens; not knowing or not valuing the blessing of a Redeemer? God expects, and has a right to demand from us, that we should act like reasonable creatures; like people who know that they are here upon trial; and this too for eternity—as people who may be happy if it be not their own fault, and who will be miserable beyond redemption, if they accept not of, or refuse to comply with the terms upon which salvation is now offered to them.

God expects therefore, that we should glorify him in our lives; that we should convince the world, that we do really believe what we profess to believe, by working out our salvation with fear—with a concern answerable to what we hope for, and what we fear. He expects, and requires, that we should resolve *"We will not sin, knowing that we are accounted thine;"* that we should not debase ourselves, by becoming the servants of Satan, from whose dominion we have been redeemed by the precious blood of his dear Son; but show our gratitude by fruits worthy of so great a mercy, and also that we *love one another*.

And O, reflect seriously, reflect upon the sad condition of those who despise or neglect this mercy of God. It is the Spirit of God who hath declared, that *"there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."* Whoever therefore does not lay hold of this means of salvation, must perish everlastingly. Little do wicked men and unbelievers think that it is *Satan the God of this world*, who is perpetually suggesting to them such things, as weaken and destroy their faith, such pleasures as blind their understandings, such ways of living as lead them directly to hell.

And yet it is certainly true, Satan hath so blinded their eyes that they cannot see the consequences of abusing the mercy of God, nor the sad condition of *being given over to a reprobate mind*. And what condition can be more dreadful than that of a man subject to the justice of God *without any interest in his mercy?*

Great kindnesses, or great judgments, are the usual methods by which God reduces his poor deluded offended creatures. In which of these methods would you wish Him to deal with you? If his mercies and living kindness, will not prevail with you, then He can only reclaim you from the ways of sin, by severe judgments. But this is not what God delights in; He would have his goodness, and that only lead you to repentance.

Few people indeed can be easy without something, which they call religion. But remember that no religion will be of use to us, which does not mend our corrupt nature, and by doing so restore us to the favour of God; which does not bring us to love Him for his goodness, to lead a christian life, and to glorify Him, by an humble dependence on his providence and submission to his will, and by doing good in our generation.

Beware of a delusion, by which too many are in danger of being ruined, by fancying that the corruption of their nature will be some excuse for their unchristian lives. God requires of us certain duties; He offers us all necessary assistance, and to reward us, according to our sincere endeavours to obey Him. To say after this, *we are all sinners and who can help it?* without resolving immediately to repent and amend, is to affront our Redeemer, and do despite to the Spirit of Grace.

Allow me, before I conclude, to apprise you of two ways, by which satan will attempt to divert you, from making a profitable use of such doctrines as these. Sometimes he will tempt christians to despair, and out of a sense of their corruption, to cry out, *O wretched creature that I am, who shall deliver me from the sin that besets me?* At other times, he tempts them to believe, that since Christ came into the world to save sinners, it is a very easy thing to be saved. Both are dangerous delusions.

Jesus did indeed come into the world to save sinners; but sinners of what description? Why those who forsake their sins, and purpose to live holy lives for the time to come. As for such as depend upon a bare outward performance of the duties of christianity, who comfort themselves with being able to say, *We have eaten and drank at thy table, and we are called by thy name;* our Lord himself has declared what judgment he will pass upon them—*Depart from me, I know you not.*

As for such sinners as are truly afraid for themselves; who sincerely lament the corruption of their nature, and out of an earnest desire to please God, cry out—*Who shall deliver me from this body of death?* Let all such remember what follows, *I thank God through Jesus Christ,* that is, for his sake, God will deliver me from the evil effects of the corruption of my nature from the power of the devil, and from eternal death. But may every sinner be confident that God will pardon those who have so many ways offended Him? Take an answer from the Son of God, Himself, *Verily all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men.* He will not reject one who cries to him for help. Let us then, even under the most desponding

thoughts, comfort ourselves with the argument of the Apostle—"If when we were sinners, and enemies to God, we were reconciled unto Him, by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by Him; for He liveth to make intercession for us."

BISHOP WILSON.

Emily.

AT first Emily set about becoming a christian, with the same expectation of success, as she would have applied herself to a language or a science. She saw that she had it all to learn, and *she thought there was nothing to be done but to learn it.* She soon however begun to experience some of the difficulties, which will be encountered by all who are in earnest. She was sincerely asking "What must I do, to inherit eternal life?" But she yet found herself unwilling to make that entire surrender of the heart to God, which he requires, and without which religion is but an irksome bondage. *She complained of a serious reluctance and disinclination to serious thought and engagements, and of a disproportionate interest in her own pursuits and pleasures.*

To these complaints her friend listened with sympathy, and administered such encouragements, as were calculated not indeed to make her easy and satisfied, with her present attainments, but to stimulate her to perseverance and diligence. She explained to her that these or similar obstacles ever oppose the entrance of real religion to the human heart, that all are naturally indisposed to embrace it; but that *those who feel and lament this indisposition, have every encouragement to expect assistance.*

"Strength," said she "is promised to those, and to those only, who are sensible of weakness; who acknowledging, with deep humility and poverty of spirit, their impotence, are willing to receive help of God. That change of heart, which consists in new dispositions and affections, new pursuits and pleasures, new apprehensions of things unseen, and without which heaven could not be happiness, is," she said "the immediate operation of the Spirit of God. It is that, for which of ourselves, we are absolutely insufficient. We must not however," continued Miss W. "expect this assistance, unless we *earnestly and constantly* seek it. *Ask* and ye shall receive; this is the invariable condition. And Emily, we must *watch* as well as pray, and diligently use every means, which God has appointed for the promotion of religion in the soul, never relaxing from that strict system of mental discipline, in which christian self-denial chiefly consists. It is to those who do the will of God, that the promise is offered."

... Emily's friends witnessed with great pleasure, the hopeful, though gradual change, that appeared to be taking place in her mind.—Without sincerity she saw that religion is but a name, and *without earnestness a shadow*.

As soon as she began to read the Bible with attention, and prayer, she perceived that she had never before read it to any good purpose. She began now to feel, that one thing is needful," and that the grand business of life, and that to which all others must be secondary, is to prepare for the life to come. Of the necessity and nature of this preparation, she became increasingly conscious the more she thought of God, and of the nature of heavenly

happiness. When she compared the state of mind, which the Scriptures call "Meetness for Heaven," with the vanity and earthliness of her present taste and pleasures, and reflected upon the distaste she felt to those, that are wholly spiritual, she began to understand, what is meant by "the renewing of the Holy Ghost," and to feel the necessity of it, although as yet her ideas of the way, in which this change must be produced, were indistinct and uncertain.

On the Duty of caring for the Souls of Relatives.

WHEN you feel that the salvation of the soul is "the one thing needful," can you look around and feel no concern for the souls of those who ought to be as dear to you as your own soul? Can you on the one hand love God above all, and on the other love your brother as yourself, and yet see that God, and they, are awfully at variance, without longing to reconcile them to God? Where the flame of charity really dwells, its first and most intense heat will be felt by those who are nearest to us. Whenever we see a professor of religion, indifferent to the salvation of his relatives, our hearts express their suspicion in the language of an Apostle—"How dwelleth the love of God in him?" Is it possible, for a real christian to look at a husband, a wife, a brother, a sister, a parent or child, in a state of alienation from God, and not yearn to impart to them this present bliss, saying "Be ye as I am, for I was, as ye are."

It is God's design in placing us so near the unconverted, that we should be the means of their conversion.—He designs to make one of his people, when renewed, the instrument

of his mercy in awakening and converting others. And to whom have you such opportunities of being useful, as to those with whom you are intimate, to whom you enjoy free access, and with whose views and dispositions you are acquainted.—
 Delightful hope! To save the wife of thy bosom! To rescue from perdition thy husband! To beget to eternal life the fruit of thine own body! How can we resist the influence of a hope so divine! The nearer a person lies to our heart, the greater must be our grief to see him a child of wrath; and the higher our delight to behold him reconciled to our religion, and our God. For want of the additional bond of grace, how often the cords of nature jar, so that we feel our hearts more in unison with a stranger who is “partaker of the like precious faith.” Let the glory of God, in Christ, appear to you in its true light; let it sink down upon your hearts with all its own weight, and the conversion of your relatives will be the object of your constant care.

By what means you should aim at the conversion of your relatives—
 1st. Seek to be filled with holy, ardent love for their souls. Nothing can be done unless the heart be first duly affected. Then your affections, always eloquent and ingenious, will suggest a thousand convincing arguments, and invent a thousand winning devices. Your love will endure all the opposition which they will make, and nothing will dishearten you. By shewing that your desire for their welfare is sincere and unquenchable, you will steal into their breasts in spite of themselves. Ye husbands who mourn over your unconverted wives, remember, that in you tenderness and firmness should be united. Let not provocations extinguish the love

which you ought to bear to them, who are thus united to you. Nor yet suffer the authority which you ought to maintain in your own house, to be trampled under foot. You cannot be useful by displaying a mere negative character which will render you contemptible. Parents! remember that your children inherit from you a depraved nature, and that you yourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived; therefore be not bitter against your unconverted children. At the same time, recollect that God says, “I know Abraham, for he will *command* his children, and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord.” But to leave children to their own will, is it to encrease their natural indisposition to the Redeemer’s yoke.

2d. The prudent and diligent use of every means of instruction, is necessary to bring our relatives to the knowledge of God. In the master of a family, there is no duty more incumbent, no means of usefulness more effectual, than constant family worship—render it pleasant, instructive and impressive.—
 Let not company hinder its performance. Where the husband has been averse, the wife has sometimes taken the children into her own room, and prayed with them. To such we may apply the words of the Redeemer, “She hath done what she could.” A christian may with success, as well as propriety, avow his conviction of the guilt and danger of the state of a relative.—
 When a pious woman was once asked, in the presence of her wicked husband, how she could so patiently endure all his provocations? She replied, “I consider that my husband has nothing but misery before him in the next world, and therefore I wish to make him as happy as

I can in this." The husband was so struck, that he replied, "and do you think I must be miserable in the next world? Then, my dear, by the help of God, I will seek to flee from the wrath to come." Col. Gardiner was first impressed by a book, which his pious mother packed up with his baggage, when he went abroad—a book left open, at a certain page, for a relative may strike effectually. To make a present or a loan of a book may do the same. But remember that God hath ordained the preaching of the cross for salvation, and exert all your influence to bring your unconverted relations under the ministry of the gospel.

3d. Frequent prayer must crown all your efforts; for in vain all your exertions without a divine blessing. None but God can give life, either natural or spiritual. By prayer, you may do good to others, in spite of themselves. When all your kindest efforts have been rejected by these, or when you have employed them all to the utmost, retire to your closets and there pour out your soul to God for them. Prayer moves the hand which hold all hearts, and turns them as the river of waters.

Finally. Let your zeal be tempered with prudence, as well as kindled by love. Let us rather deplore our guilt in neglecting it as we have done, so that one and another might have said "no man careth for my soul." We who would agonize to see them in pain or sickness, who would have gone thro' fire and water to procure a physician to heal their bodies, when on the verge of the grave, how have we suffered their immortal souls, which are infinitely more precious, to languish under the dominion of sin, and in danger of everlasting wrath! Lord, lay not this sin, to our charge!

But if you would prove that di-

vine and holy love is shed abroad in your heart; if you would avoid being corrupted by carnal relatives; if you would concur with the merciful design of God, in connecting you with the unconverted; if you would imitate the example of Christ and his apostles; if you would share in the delights of angels in rejoicing over the returning sinner; if you would glorify your God and Saviour, be it your study to win your relatives to the grace of Christ here, that you may be with them in glory for ever.

Upon the Right Knowledge of the Lord God.

The first and chief point in our religious enquiries, is to discover what God is. This is the fundamental article upon which all the rest depend. We cannot love what we know nothing of. If there be very dark and confused ideas of Him in the understanding, there cannot be much true love of Him in the heart. He has not left us at liberty to think what we please about his essence and his personality because he has revealed what we are to believe about both. We are not left to reasoning about the being of God, from the light of nature, or from philosophy or metaphysics; but the Scripture has fixed our creed, and we must abide by it. He that cometh to God must believe that He is. How are we to come to the knowledge of Him? Shall Scripture or reason decide? "Canst thou, by searching, find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? No. It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know?" (9 Job.) The reason of this is assigned in Mat. 27. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither

knoweth any man the Father, save the son, and he to whomsoever the son will reveal Him." Again, 1. Cor. 1. 21. "The world by wisdom knew not God." The world by such wisdom, as it could attain, was not able to discover the true God.

Did reason ever find out God, and did any reasoners ever find out the Almighty to perfection? Who were the men? When and where did they live? In the refined and enlightened ages of Greece? Did the learned Romans find out God? No, not one of them. Their reason was not equal to the task. Cicero has left us a curious treatise upon the nature of the Gods, in which he has demonstrated that the world by wisdom knew not God. In this volume there is not a conjecture or hint about the nature of God. Did any man ever make a better use of his reasoning faculties than Tully? And yet with all his searching he could not find out God. Reason indeed boasts great things, and pretends, by the help of metaphysics, to discover the secrets of the spiritual world; but these are vain boastings. How weak and groundless then are the boastings of our modern unbelievers, who pretend to discover what God is by the mere dint of reason? Do they know more of God, than the philosophers did? No. They have greater helps, but by rejecting them, their pride is greater, and their ignorance appears more manifest, for they have left revelation, and have invented to themselves, *as empty an idol as any heathen philosopher ever worshipped.* They rejected the God, head of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, and have imagined to themselves a God existing in one person, infinitely extended, filling infinite space. And

this idol, this nothing in the world, has become the fashionable divinity of our times. But its worshippers are all traitors. Every act of worship paid to this idol, is high treason; for by such act men withdraw their allegiance from the true God, and pay it to what has no more divinity than stocks and stones.

Is it so then that there can be no worship or love of God, unless it be paid to the true God? Have I then the right object of worship for my God? How was I brought to the knowledge of Him? Did I find Him out by the light of reason? And did metaphysics help me to find Him out to perfection? If I have taken this method, I have been deceiving myself, for the world by its reason, never found out God. Or was I brought to the knowledge of Him in this way—was I convinced of sin, and humbled under the sense of it, and did I then find myself fallen from God and alienated from the life of God, so that I had no means of discovering his nature and perfections, *but as revealed by his word and by his Spirit?* Did I read the word, and pray for the Holy Spirit to open and to explain it, that I might come to the knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent? And am I still in this humble, teachable frame of mind, *reading the word, and praying for the teachings of the Spirit of God?* If this be your case, happy are you—God has promised, and his word cannot be broken. He will teach you the knowledge of Himself, and will manifest to you his essence and personality.

The wisest men upon earth cannot describe in what manner any material object exists; for the atoms of which bodies are composed fall

not under the observation of our senses. And since we know not the manner of the existence of the material bodies, with which ourselves are conversant, how absurd would it be for any man, to pretend to know the manner of the existence of a Spiritual Being? How presumptuous then is it for any man to undertake to describe *how* Jehovah exists, and rashly to affirm that He exists, in a manner which excludes all personality, while this very man does not know the manner of the existence of any one thing, in the world! And yet every little philosopher, who has but just learned to reason upon the objects, which are within his reach, pretends to reason about the nature and attributes of God, and one of them, more proud and ignorant than the rest, thought he could prove *a priori* that Jehovah exists in one person, although Jehovah himself declares He does not.

We have no ideas but from our senses, and there is no object within the reach of our senses, which exists by a necessity of nature. There is but one Jehovah, and He exists in a manner, of which no other thing can give us a perfect idea, and therefore we can have no reason to reject the account which God has given us of the manner of his existence; but if we act consistently, we must receive and abide by the revealed account which teaches us that Jehovah is the self-existent essence, and that this essence is one, but that the Albehim, the *persons* in Jehovah, are three. There was no doubt in the first ages about the personality; the Scripture guards most the unity of the essence, and while it affirms the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to be of the same self-existent essence, it at the same time teaches

us that these three are but one—one in essence, but three in person.

ROMAINE.

On the Collect for Peace.—Rogers.

"O God who art the Author of Peace and lover of Concord."

We shall not be wrong in our calculations, when we reckon peace, as the chief of our earthly blessings. If strangers to this, what would the blessings of Providence avail us? Riches would be a heavy load—family connexions, an increase of misery, health, a calamity, and life itself a burden.

But when this blessing prevails among the nations of the world, we are not to ascribe the effect to the wisdom of human counsels, but to the provident care and goodness of God. We must look beyond men for the efficient cause. It is God that maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth. When he says to contending nations, "Peace be still," the rage and fury of mens passions are restrained, and the storm is hushed into a calm.

Where harmony and good order prevail in the Church, we are not to attribute it to any merit in man. It is God that maketh peace in her borders. So likewise in particular families, in which peace hath almost an uninterrupted reign, the Holy Scriptures refer us to the true cause of this felicity, "It is God that maketh men to be of one mind in a house." "He is the author of peace and lover of concord."

But God is not the author only of temporal peace and tranquility: he has a steady and unshaken regard to the spiritual and everlasting happiness of mankind. He has made an ample provision for their inward peace. For what would external quietude profit us, if we have war

in our hearts? If headstrong passions, ungovernable tempers, the rage of lust, the gnawings of envy, or the constant forebodings of divine wrath, torment and harass us from day to day: the restless and disturbed state of our minds, will be justly represented by the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. Those people, who are at variance with themselves, and are obstinately and habitually exposing themselves to the daily rebukes and lashes of their own consciences, are of all people the most miserable. They are constantly preparing rods for their own backs, and are as constantly made to feel them. And whatever may be their external appearance, whatever airs of gaiety and mirth they may assume, they have a something within them that poisons their boasted enjoyments, and tells them they are at enmity with themselves and with God.

But in the covenant of grace, an adequate remedy is provided for this miserable and disordered state of the heart. For though we groan under the tyranny of unbridled appetites, and justly expect to feel the divine indignation, yet God has graciously devised means whereby we may obtain reconciliation with Him, and acquire inward peace. When no other sacrifice could atone for the transgressions of mankind, than the sacrifice of the death of Christ, that sacrifice was willingly offered by the Saviour. "Lo I come to do thy will, O my God." At length when the awful moment arrived, when he was to ratify the divine covenant, he made peace through the blood of his Cross. Wherefore, having now reconciled us unto the Father, by giving himself a ransom for our souls, those who believe in Him," are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with

the Saints, and of the household of God. For in order that the benefits of this great salvation may be really experienced in the hearts of individuals; the Holy Ghost is promised that He may give a right and spiritual direction to all the faculties of our minds." A new heart will I give them, and a new spirit will I put within them." By these means we are delivered as well from the dominion as from the guilt of sin. *The enmity that was in our hearts against the government and grace of God is slain;* the tyranny of those inbred enemies, pride, vanity, self-will, envy and covetousness, is broken: *we begin to feel the happy effects of the reign of grace, which are peace and quietness forever.* We see the Father, reconciled to us, through the sufferings and intercessions of Jesus: we taste that he is gracious, we delight ourselves in what He commands, and abhor that which He forbids. In short, we come to the enjoyment of that peace of mind, which passeth all understanding, and which the world can neither give nor take away. And this peace is justly compared to a river, which flows deeper and wider as it approaches the ocean. *For the further we advance in the divine life, and the greater our attainments are in grace, the more solid and permanent will be our consolations.* Let us endeavour to bear these things in mind, when we present this address at the divine footstool, "O God who art the author of peace and lover of concord."

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"In knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom."

On a right knowledge of the Almighty, as the author of peace, and lover of concord, depends our everlasting welfare. If we are igno-

rant of his character, *as reconciling the world to himself in Christ Jesus*, however extensive and correct our knowledge of other subjects may be we know not the way of peace. If our understanding is not enlightened and directed by his word—if our will is not obedient to his command—if our affections are not sanctified by the influence of his Spirit, we know Him not; *though we may have heard of Him by the hearing of the ear*, and may profess to be people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. We must be disciplined in the school of Christ—we must be renewed by the Divine Spirit—we must acquaint ourselves with God and be at peace.

If we have acquired this spiritual knowledge of God; a sense of his love to us, and our interest in Him: then “His service will be perfect freedom.” We shall no longer be slaves to our ungovernable tempers, and unbridled appetites; no longer be dragged from place to place by the cords of vanity; nor governed by the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; we shall be delivered from these hard task masters, and enjoy the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free. The hours devoted to religion will be our happiest hours: prayer and praise will be the unfeigned language of our hearts: to hear and read the word of God, will be spirit and life to our souls: the Sabbath will be a day of spiritual refreshment; and the ordinances of the sanctuary will be as walls of salvation.

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“That we, surely trusting in thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries.”

When the mind is perpetually harrassed with fear, there can be no peace, no spiritual enjoyment. It

enfeebles our exertions, it discourages our hopes, it damps our expectations. The only infallible remedy for this impediment to our progress in the divine life, is a sure trust and confidence in God’s protection. All other refuge will prove insufficient, every other dependence will disappoint us. By leaving the only rock of our defence, we shall give ourselves into the power of our enemies and become a prey to despondency and death. O then let us pray for a firm reliance on the divine power, which alone can defend us—let us seek for that faith which is of the operation of God. This will give effect to our principles, enable us to maintain our ground, and preserve us from being in bondage all our life through fear. But how is this to be effectually obtained and realized in our experience?

“Through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord.”

As we have no divine wisdom but what we received from God, so we have no spiritual strength but what we derive from an union with Christ. It is through Him that we obtain grace to help us in every time of need. Our fears are not hid from him, and he is touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Jesus is a watchful shepherd who neither slumbers nor sleeps. His eye is always upon the sheep of his pasture. O that these considerations may lead us, unfeignedly to trust in his defence, and in the power of his might! Our fears will then give place to that hope and confidence which shall never make us ashamed. We shall bid defiance to every enemy and possess our souls in patience. For whilst his arms are underneath us, for our support, and his love and faithfulness our shield and buckler, “No weapon that is formed against us shall prosper.”

Hence we see the grounds and reasons of the petitions in the collect, "Defend us thy humble servants in all the assaults of our enemies." In ourselves we have no strength for the battle; but our Redeemer is strong, the Lord of Hosts is his name." Are we making him the foundation of our confidence? If we call not upon him with an humble, lowly, penitent and obedient heart, our petitions will have no avail. If after our prayers, we think no more of that protection which we here solicit, or of that grace which we request, but deliberately expose ourselves to the temptations and assaults of our spiritual enemies, we may rest assured that although we offer unto God, the service of our lips, we withhold from him the affections of our hearts.

To know God is life eternal, and his service is perfect freedom. Do we understand these things?

ROGERS.

The Necessity of Divine Teaching.

"BLESSED is the man, says the Psalmist, (19 Psalm,) whom thou teachest out of thy law." He is blessed because he is taught of God; taught by him to know his guilt and misery, and taught also to know the remedy provided for both. And yet how few among us seek this blessedness? Even among those who profess their belief of it, its importance is not sufficiently valued. The privilege is inestimably great, but they are too apt to neglect it; while others proudly fancy that they can teach themselves; they disbelieve the reality, or they neglect the importance of divine teaching. But He that teacheth man knowledge, can, and glory be to his rich grace, he does convince him of the necessity of being taught of God. He

does enlighten the darkest, and does humble the proudest mind, and bring it earnestly to pray for instruction. "Lord what I know not, that teach thou me."

Let us endeavour to be convinced,
1st, Of the necessity of being taught of God.

2nd, Of the manner in which God teaches his people.

3d, Of the proper disposition of mind which he gives them to enable them to receive and profit by his divine teaching.

1. Divine teaching consists in opening the eyes of the understanding to perceive spiritual and divine objects, and to see their value and importance; in disposing the will to choose them, and the heart to love them. The divine teacher is the Holy Spirit. He prepares the mind to receive his instruction, and then fills it with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. The necessity of his doing this is founded in the present state and circumstances of fallen man; for through sin all the faculties of the soul were lost, and the understanding, which is the eye of the soul, was left in the same condition as the bodily eyes would be, if they had no light. Hence the Psalmist declares there is none that understandeth the things of God, and he represents God as looking down from Heaven, to see if there were any who did understand and seek after God; but he found none, no not one. The prophets give us the same character, and speak of men as if they were all blind, and describe the Messiah to be the Sun of Righteousness—the light who was to arise to lighten the Gentiles, (see 43 Isaiah 7, 49 Isaiah 6.) Did the Lord fulfil these prophecies? He is daily fulfilling them in the Gentile world, by opening the blind eyes of

our understandings to see and discern the things of God. "The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind, (146 Psalm 8) that is, the Lord Christ, for we read, 55 Isaiah 4, 5, "Say unto them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not, your God will come and save you, then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, for in that day, (39 Isaiah, 18) shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. And God who was to come and save us, said, "I am come a light into the world, that who ever believeth on me, should not abide in darkness."

Fallen man therefore is in darkness, and cannot see the things of God. The eyes of his understanding are in the same condition as his bodily eyes would be without light. He cannot see any spiritual objects, and how then can he come to the knowledge of them, unless he be taught them of God? Has he any powers or faculties of his own which can help to enlighten him? Since the eyes of his understanding are in darkness, all his endeavours to enlighten them without divine teaching, will be like those of a blind man, who only makes his blindness more manifest, the more he labours and strives to give an account of those objects which he never saw nor felt.

But cannot the arts and sciences enlighten his blind eyes? No. They cannot help him, to discover one single spiritual idea. The arts and sciences treat of the objects of sense; to these they are confined, and cannot get beyond the bounds of nature. It is a certain truth that all our ideas come from sense. We are not able to form an idea of any thing, unless it fall under the observation of some of our senses. *If any one of the senses be destroyed,*

the man is not able to form an idea of any object peculiar to that sense. A man born deaf has no idea of sounds, nor a blind man of colours. Since then the arts and sciences treat entirely of the objects of sense, how can they give any ideas of those things which are not objects of sense? The understanding may be ever so greatly enlarged with the knowledge of the arts and sciences, yet it stands in as much need of divine teaching, as the mind of the most ignorant peasant. Let matter of fact speak to this point. Has there not been a total ignorance of divine things, whenever the light of revelation has been extinguished? Look into the learned ages of Greece, into the times when Rome was raised to its highest glory, and was as famous for its learning as for its conquests, and you will not find one man who can tell you what God is. We know from the experience of the Greeks and Romans, that arts and sciences never did lead them to the knowledge of any spiritual and divine objects; and we are assured from the testimony of God's word, that they never can. Man in his natural state, blinded by sin, and under the power of it, cannot attain to any such knowledge. The apostle, speaking of the politest classical age of Rome, says that they were without understanding, that they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. What! was Tully without understanding? Was the imagination of Virgil vain, and the heart of Seneca foolish? Yes, in the things of God;" for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, (1. Cor. 2. 14.) While he remains a natural man, it

is absolutely impossible that he should know them, "neither can he know them," because he has no spiritual discernment, by which alone spiritual objects can be discovered; and therefore he must remain forever ignorant of them, unless God should open the eyes of his understanding, and bring him out of darkness into his marvellous light.

This is a very humbling, but it is a real view of human nature; and I need not have gone to distant ages and countries for proof. We have it near enough at home, if men's pride would let them see it; but *their pride arises chiefly from their ignorance of it, and helps to keep them ignorant.* If they had but a little humility, they would discover how imperfect their knowledge is, even of the things about them, and they would therefore see the necessity of their being taught of God, in those things which are out of the reach of their senses. Such are all spiritual and divine things, and in these they want divine teaching, and the promise is concerning these. "All thy children shall be taught of God." In what belongs to the spiritual world, they are entirely ignorant; and they have means of discovering (unless they be taught of God) what state they are in by nature, and if it be a state of guilt and misery, how they are to be delivered from it.

God has revealed in his Holy Word, the knowledge of what belongs to these two states: but sin has so blinded men's understandings, and depraved their judgments, that they will not assent to what is revealed, nor be determined by it, until the Holy Spirit convince them what they are by nature, and what they may be by grace. Accordingly, the Scripture declares that the Holy Spirit is the Inspirer of every good, thought, and word, and work. He

enlightens the Children of God with saving truth; and subdues the opposition which was in their wills to it, and that enmity which was in their hearts. From the first moment that He awakens them, and opens the eyes of their understanding, until He brings them safe to glory. He is their teacher. He teaches them to look upon sin, as it is in itself, exceedingly sinful. He alarms the conscience, and makes it feel the guilt and danger of sin. He leads the humbled and convinced sinner to Christ for pardon; He gives him *faith and hope, and love*; and by grafting him, like a living branch into the true vine, enables him to bear much fruit to the glory of God. And since every thing good in him comes from divine teaching, is it not absolutely necessary that he should be taught of God?

[To be continued.]

From a letter to a Young Lady.

Whether we reject or acknowledge the government of the blessed Jesus in this world, we shall stand at his judgment seat hereafter. The pleas that will be admitted in behalf of those, to whom the evangelical tidings of a Redeemer were never proclaimed, cannot be urged in favor of *Pagans by choice*, who though born, baptized, and educated in a Christian country, preferred the darkness of Deism to the light which shone around them. Whoever lives where christianity is professed, is by birth a subject of the Lamb of God. He may renounce his allegiance, he may insult and despise his Sovereign; but these frantic acts do not transform him into an alien, but a rebel. Born under the legislation of the Gospel, it is against that dispensation that he sins, and it is by that he will be judged. His boasted liberty of being free to

choose his master, extends only to the grave. Even if his moral conduct was such as to suggest hopes of escaping future vengeance, the penalty will attach to his *principles*. The gaudy show of benevolence, integrity or liberality, which proceeded not from the desire of pleasing God, and were not offered to him, with the sweet smelling savour of faith in Christ, only constitute that defective righteousness, which we are assured will not be accepted by God, *from those whom he has called to the knowledge of his son*. It is certain that the "infection of man's nature" remains in some degree in us all. The church makes no pretensions either to aggregate individual perfection. She acknowledges her militant state, and conscious that her members "are beset with so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of their mortal nature, they cannot always stand upright," she implores such supplies of strength and protection, as may carry them through all temptations. The Christian's life is ever described as an arduous race, a painful conflict, a day of labour and sorrow, a struggle with the powers of darkness.

Extracts.

WHATEVER may be the corruption of our nature, whatever the power of pain to stagger our virtue, or of pleasure to seduce it, it is impossible we can be so formed, or so situated by a just and good God, as to be under an absolute necessity of transgressing those laws, which He has laid down for the regulation of our conduct. We may rest assured that He will give us power, either natural, or supernatural, to balance our defeats. In the common trials of our virtue, the common efforts of our nature, and the common influ-

ences of the Holy Spirit will be able to support us. "If any temptation come upon us, more than is *common to man*," God will send us, *provided we desire, and endeavour to deserve it*, more than common assistance.

We are not however to conclude from hence, that God will deliver us out of temptation without any trouble on our part. As without *Him*, we can do nothing, so neither will He do any thing without *us*. His grace is not intended to supersede, but to co-operate with our own earnest endeavours: and *the most effectual method of securing to ourselves the divine assistance, is to make a speedy and vigorous use of all those means with which we are furnished for working out our salvation*.

PORTEUS.

THE province of reason in respect to revelation, is first to examine and decide on, with modesty and caution, the evidences by which it is supported: to understand and explain the language in which it is conveyed: to discern, in many things, the excellency of the things revealed to us, and to use them as motives, encouragements and rules of obedience; and in things mysterious to bow in humble submission to the divine teaching, to receive in adoring faith and love what we cannot comprehend, to rest satisfied with what is revealed, and to leave secret things to God, to whom alone they belong.

IF God be the treasurer delighted in, our hearts will be drawn to Him; servile fear makes the soul fly from God; sacred love makes it fly to Him.

THERE is but a short space of time granted us, therefore work the harder for Heaven.